PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 21 Number 10 October 2024

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, October 20, 2024, 6.30AM: Yenkathala Grasslands. Meeting Point(s): Morine Bakery, Narsingi, 05:15AM. Trip Coordinator(s): A Gokul Krishna (Mobile: 99453-46585)

Yenkathala is a mixed forest with shrubs, grasslands and a lake, and is rich in bird life. Some of the key birds to look out for are Harriers, Eagles, Black-headed Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Tree Pipit, Rain Quail, Jungle Bush Quail, Rock Bush Quail, Barred Buttonquail, Painted Francolin, Baya Weaver etc.

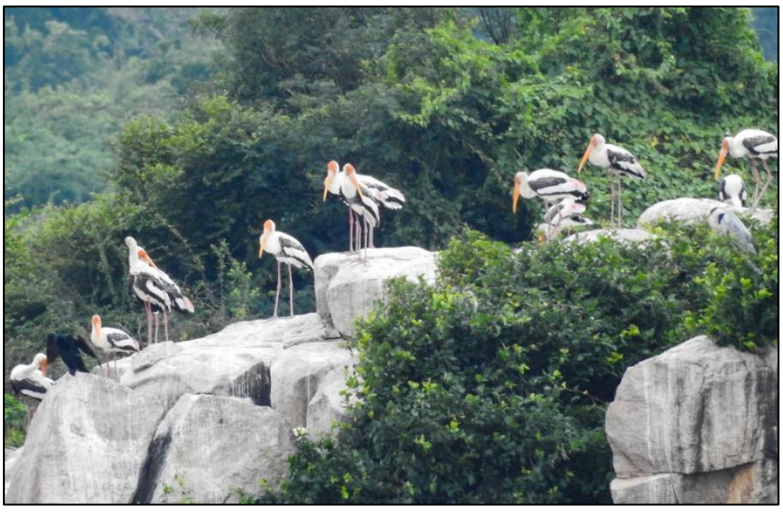
FIELD TRIP-2: Sunday, October 27, 2024, 7.00AM: Anna Sagar Lake, Jogipet. Meeting Point(s): BHEL Junction, 06:00AM; Taj Dhaba, Muthangi, 06:30AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Sudhir Moorti (Mobile: 96522-83335)

Anna Sagar is a beautiful lake situated in the Sangareddy district of Telangana. The lake is a birding hotspot with an impressive list of 200+ species sighted here. Flamingos, Avocets, Godwits etc have been sighted here frequently. The winter visitors have started dropping in so we can expect some good sightings.

Both trips will be half-day trips, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Covid protocols will be followed; please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

Trip Report: Edulabad Lake, August 25, 2024

JVD Moorty



Painted Stork (Photo: Sudha Nair)

Field trips are something to look forward to – a few unguaranteed surprises, the usual culprits, and the mundane species, that we often tend to look askance at.

The trip to Edulabad was organised on August 25, 2024 with a slightly more 'comfortable' departure time of 7:00AM, as the location was within the limits of the Outer Ring Road, city limits, so to speak. Yours truly was the coordinator and had three passengers to pick up – Sharad Murdeshwar and his family. The metro that brought them to the NGRI pick-up point was *über* punctual! It had rained the night before, an ominous foreboding of a low turnout of both birders and birds. An overcast sky was a grey reminder of the rain-to-be. But the day, despite being cloudy – the absence of sun and a cool breeze made the morning very pleasant – offered some good sightings.

The drive to Edulabad was uneventful and traffic free – almost. The topography of the place had changed beyond my recognition. A black-topped road, a far cry from the peaks-and-troughs track of yore, was a pleasant surprise, so much so that I could afford to look around for birds whilst driving. The lush green paddy fields spread out to as far as the eye could see. And that's where we stopped to bird; stopped by a flock of roughly 7-8 Scaly-breasted Munias that undulated across the windscreen of the car with their typical flap-no flap wingbeats.

Asian Pied Starling (Photo: Sudha Nair)

Baya Weaver (Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)

Our attention was then drawn to some roughly built nests of the Baya Weavers swaying to the tunes of the gentle breeze, when a sudden flash of yellow announced the arrival of a couple of male Bayas involved in the real estate that we were keenly watching. They had strands of building material and busied themselves with the intricate knotting and weaving under the critical eye of a female who arrived to watch their fervent activity.

Jacobin Cuckoo (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

A Jacobin Cuckoo flew in on to the electric cable above to observe us, thus providing a photo-op. We later found out that the rest of the group had also seen it.

Anxious phone calls and messages alerted us to the fact that others were waiting on the *bund* of the lake, the rendezvous point. The *bund*, an earthen levee, raised basically to prevent water from running out, was a walking path in my memory. But today, it was something to drive on, paved with pipe-railings on either side and vegetation on its sloping embankments that harboured a few Plain and Ashy Prinias calling ceaselessly while flitting rapidly through the leaves.

Plain Prinia (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Ashy Prinia (Photo: Sudha Nair)

It was a small group that awaited us there and we were gently chided for showing up late, our explanation for midway birding notwithstanding, to which we pleaded guilty. *Pax romana* having been restored, we got down to exchanging notes.

They told us that they had seen a pair of Barred Buttonquails in the bushes on the embankment at the edge of the paddy fields – and we rued the fact that we had missed them!

Barred Buttonquail (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

The lake, located near Ghatkesar, Hyderabad, is also known as Edulabad water reservoir. Industrial sewage and waste from Patancheru on the western side of the city had polluted this lake, killing fish and causing illness in lakeside communities in 2002. The lake at that time had a pinkish hue due to the chemicals in the sewage industries. But today the water body appeared to have regained some of its health, given the abundance of paddy crop and the lush greenery nearby.

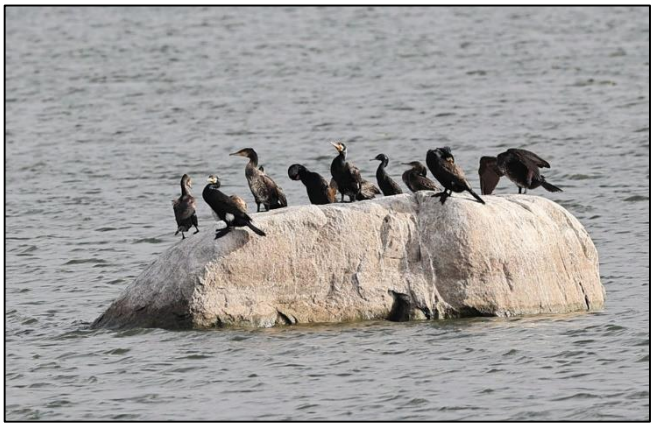
A view of the fields near the lake (Photo: Sudha Nair)

White-throated Kingfisher (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Pied Kingfisher (Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)

We saw several water birds nearby: Asian Openbills, White-throated Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Cattle Egrets accompanied by their kin Little Egrets, Black-headed Ibis, Great and Indian Cormorants.

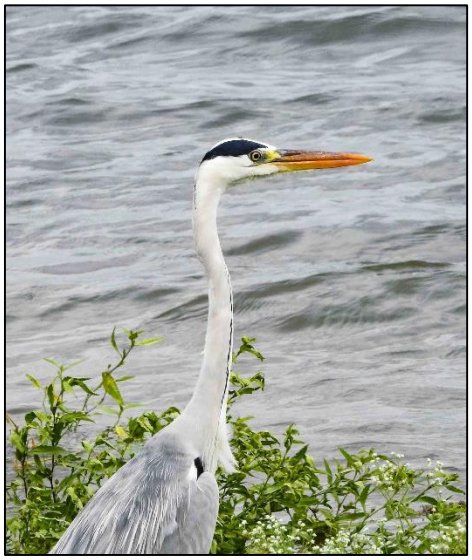
Little Egret (Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)



Great Cormorant (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Indian Cormorant (Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)

Also seen were a few Darters, a lone Brahminy kite, Grey and Purple Herons, the ubiquitous and unobtrusive Pond Herons, Red-rumped and Barn Swallows flying around tirelessly.



Grey Heron (Photo: Sudha Nair)

Purple Heron (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

The fields and the trees had several Indian Silverbills, Scaly-breasted and Tricoloured Munias, Zitting Cisticolas and Siberian Stonechats. Ashy Woodswallows huddled together wing-to-wing on the overhead wires as if they were affixed to each other.

Ashy Woodswallow (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Shikra (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Driving down the *bund* brought us to a fairly large stinky dump-yard, but on the positive side we saw a water tanker that was watering the plants along the edges of the *bund*. Hopefully these workers were also entrusted with the task of removing the garbage, though I had my own doubts about it.

Around 11:30AM the sun waging a lone battle with the clouds won, and the day turned quite warm and sultry enough to send us home.

Edulabad lake with a surface area of 5 square kilometres and a surface elevation of 1,759 feet (536 meters) irrigates the paddy fields, feeds the water birds, supports fish, and provides drinking water to the village. This water body is now crying out loudly for help. Are we listening?

The list of birds seen during the trip:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	29	Grey Heron	*Ardea grayii*
2	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	30	Jacobin Cuckoo	*Clamator jacobinus*
3	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	31	Ashy Woodswallow	*Artamus fuscus*
4	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	32	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*
5	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus coramandus*	33	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola torquatus*
6	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	34	Zitting Cisticola	*Cisticola juncidis*
7	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus phillipinus*	35	Purple Heron	*Ardea purperea*
8	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*	36	Spot-billed Duck	*Anas poecilorhyncha*
9	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	37	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*
10	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*	38	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*
11	Indian Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	39	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*
12	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*	40	Indian Robin	*Saxicoloidus fulicatus*
13	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	41	Coppersmith Barbet	*Megalaima haemacephala*
14	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	42	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*
15	Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*	43	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*
16	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*	44	Red-rumped Swallow	*Cecropis daurica*
17	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*	45	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
18	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	46	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*
19	Little Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax niger*	47	Barred Buttonquail	*Turnix suscitator*
20	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*	48	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*
21	Yellow-eyed Babbler	*Chrysomma sinense*	49	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
22	Little Grebe	*Chrysomma sinense*	50	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
23	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	51	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*
24	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*	52	Indian Silverbill	*Euodice malabarica*
25	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*	53	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
26	Asian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*	54	Tricoloured Munia	*Lonchura malacca*
27	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*	55	Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*
28	Spotted Dove	*Spilopelia chinensis*			

Some other photographs taken during the trip:

Yellow-eyed Babbler (Photo: Sudha Nair)

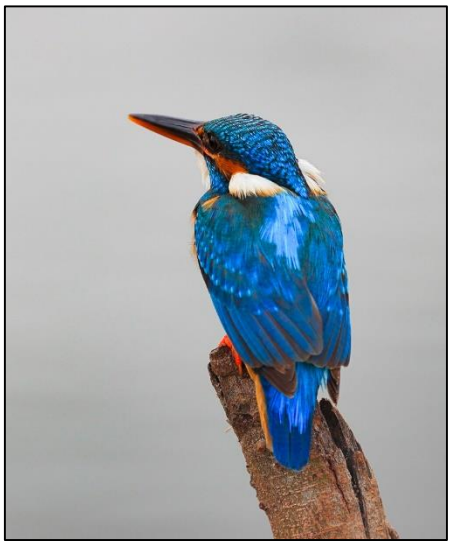
Lesser Whistling-duck (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Rose-ringed Parakeet (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Little Cormorant (Photo: Sudha Nair)

Pied Bushchat male
(Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)

Pied Bushchat female
(Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)



Common Kingfisher
(Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Ashy Prinia (Photo: Mohd Adnan Uddin)

Indian Golden Oriole
(Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Scaly-bellied Munia
(Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

Little Grebe (Photo: Sudha Nair)

Jacobin Cuckoo (Photo: Abhishek Shroti)

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Report: Birds Of Kashmir, Sep 2023 & June 2024

Text & Photos: Sita Susarla

Yellow-breasted Greenfinch

It was a journey through six districts and 10 different bird habitats of the Kashmir valley during September 2023 and June 2024 that left us in awe of the spectacular birds in this part of our country.

The Tawny Owls of Chadoora, the Ibisbills of Kangan, the assortment of Finches and Grosbeaks of Sinthan Top, the Rock Buntings of Naranag, the Kashmir Flycatcher of Dachigam, the Little Bitterns of Inner Dal Lake, the Kashmir Nutcrackers of Yousmarg, the Brown-flanked Bush Warbler of Rajparian WLS are some of the fascinating avian species of the valley.

Nestled in the western Himalayan temperate coniferous forests of Pine, Oak, Beech, Deodar, Cedar, Chinar, and Willow, Kashmir is home to many species of resident and migratory birds.

The visit in September 2023 was to Chadoora town, Sinthan Top and Yousmarg. It was a one-hour drive from Srinagar city to Chadoora town, and at many places, we stopped to look at the river Jhelum gushing through the rocky terrain in the backdrop of tall mountains. We saw the Brown Dipper and Plumbeous Redstart at many places.

Tawny Owl

At Chadoora it was not long before we saw the Tawny Owl hidden in the thick canopy of the Chinar trees. These are non-migratory territorial birds that are capable of adapting to different environments.

After seeing the Tawny Owls in Chadoora, we drove back to the city to our next halt at the Botanical Garden. Here we saw the Eurasian Jackdaw, lots of Russet Sparrows and many Yellow-breasted Greenfinches on the cedar trees. As the sun began to set, we began to walk back and stopped to listen to some melodious renderings of Kashmiri folk music by talented musicians who were performing in the garden. It was heartening to see a lot of school children who were visiting the garden and who formed an enthusiastic audience for the musicians.

White-winged Grosbeak

Kashmir Nutcracker

The next day at Sinthan Top, we stopped at various heights of the Pir-Panjal range. We spotted White-winged Grosbeaks, Kashmir Nutcrackers, Plain Mountain Finches, a pair of Spectacled Finches, Dark-sided Flycatcher, Common Buzzard, Tree Pipit, Eurasian Wren and Blue-fronted Redstart.

Blue-fronted Redstart

Sinthan Top is a mesmerizing range of landscapes and the junipers spread on the slopes as dark green patches are signature plants of the region. The juniper can exist in various forms, from short shrubs to tall trees.

Rufous-naped Tit

The next visit in June 2024 was to Yousmarg, which was an equally enchanting location. Here the Kashmir Nutcrackers were in abundance. The Rusty-tailed Flycatcher, Rufous-naped Tits and Tytler's Warbler were the highlights here.

We visited the valley again in June as we wanted to see birds such as the Ibisbill, European Bee-eater and Little Bittern which can be spotted during this time of the year in Kashmir. This time we went to Kangan, Naranag, Wangath, Rajparian Wildlife Sanctuary, the Inner Dal Lake Road and Royal Springs Golf Course premises in Srinagar.

Ibisbill

The Ibisbill was spotted at Sindh River valley at Kangan in Ganderbal district. We looked for it in other parts of the country but we were not lucky. At Kangan, we luckily spotted it, standing on the rocks amidst grassy bushes. We were thrilled to see it in all its grandeur and it stayed there for a long time and gave us plenty of good views.

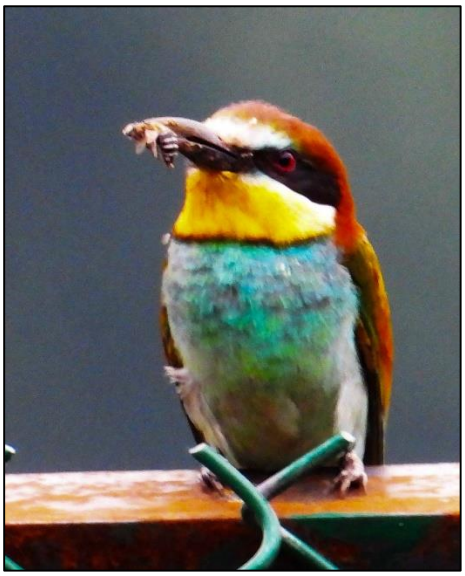
A couple of Black Kites were flying over it and we thought that the Ibisbill's nest may be nearby. The Ibisbill prefers a habitat of rocky rivers and streams where it is easily camouflaged. It is a dainty bird with a long down-curved red bill, black face, grey upper parts and white belly. The special feature about this bird is that it is the only member of the family Ibidorhynchidae.

Having seen the Ibisbill, we proceeded to Wangath valley and Naranag to see Forktails. The valley houses an ancient Shiva temple dating from the 8th century AD. The temple is in ruins now, although it is a protected monument. On the way to Naranag we spotted Rock Buntings, Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Brown-flanked Bush Warbler and Western Crowned Warbler.

Rock Bunting

The trip to Wangath was on a Saturday and the place being a great picnic spot, it was buzzling with school and college children. There were a few Grey Bushchats feeding their chicks. There was no sign of any Forktails though, and we quickly then moved to Brein Nishat to try and look for the European Bee-eaters at the foothills of the Zabarawan mountain ranges.

The approach area was fenced and so we had to take a detour through a steep rocky terrain. By the time we reached the spot, light began to fade. But we were lucky to spot them flying close to where we were. One of the Bee-eaters landed on the fence and we could take some very good pictures of it. We were also rewarded by panoramic views of the Dal Lake and Srinagar city.



European Bee-eater

The next day we spent a couple of hours in the morning at Royal Springs Golf Course, and found that the place was a hotspot for birds. There were many birds there: Long-tailed Minivets, Grey-winged Blackbirds, Scaly-bellied Woodpecker, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Indian Cuckoo, Great Barbet, Brown-flanked Bush Warbler, Rufous-naped Tits, Himalayan and Black Bulbuls, Tickell's Thrush and Blue Whistling Thrush.

Grey-winged Blackbird

Scaly-bellied Woodpecker

From here we proceeded to Dal Lake interior to see the Little Bittern. It was a three kilometre long walk on a road that was surprisingly busy with traffic. On either side were the floating vegetable gardens of cucumbers and melons and also lotus farms. Farmers on boats were seen sowing some grasses.

We scanned the reeds on either side of the road for the Little Bittern when out came the Clamorous Reed Warblers and Sparrows. After about an hour of walking along this road in the lake, we had a fleeting glimpse of the Little Bittern as it flew from some reeds at the side of the road and disappeared into the far-off marshes.

We stopped under a tree to have our breakfast accompanied by some salted tea and waited to see if the Bittern would come back. As there were no signs of the bird, we headed back as our trip to Kashmir was coming to an end.

We had on our list about 20 lifers from these two visits to Kashmir, with the Ibisbill and European Bee-eaters as the highlights.

The list of birds seen at the various locations is given below:

BIRDS OF CHADOORA (September 2023)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	7	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
2	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	8	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
3	Tawny Owl	*Strix aluco*	9	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
4	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	10	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
5	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	11	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
6	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	12	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*

BIRDS OF KASHMIR BOTANICAL GARDEN (September 2023)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	7	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	8	Greenish Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochiloides*
3	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	9	Streaked Laughingthrush	*Garrulax lineatus*
4	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	10	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
5	Eurasian Jackdaw	*Corvus monedula*	11	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*
6	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	12	Yellow-breasted Greenfinch	*Chloris spinoides*

BIRDS OF SINTHAN TOP (September 2023)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	13	Eurasian Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*
2	Himalayan Griffon	*Gyps himalayensis*	14	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
3	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	15	Dark-sided Flycatcher	*Muscicapa sibirica*
4	Common Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*	16	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
5	Kashmir Nutcracker	*Nucifraga multipunctata*	17	Blue-fronted Redstart	*Phoenicurus frontalis*
6	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	18	Plumbeous Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*
7	Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*	19	White-capped Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*
8	Rufous-naped Tit	*Periparus rufonuchalis*	20	Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*
9	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*	21	White-winged Grosbeak	*Mycerobas carnipes*
10	Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*	22	Plain Mountain Finch	*Leucosticte nemoricola*
11	White-cheeked Nuthatch	*Sitta leucopsis*	23	Yellow-breasted Greenfinch	*Chloris spinoides*
12	Kashmir Nuthatch	*Sitta cashmirensis*	24	European Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*

BIRDS OF YOUSMARG (September 2023)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	8	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	9	Tytler's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus tytleri*
3	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	10	Kashmir Nuthatch	*Sitta cashmirensis*
4	Kashmir Nutcracker	*Nucifraga multipunctata*	11	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
5	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	12	Dark-sided Flycatcher	*Muscicapa sibirica*
6	Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*	13	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
7	Rufous-naped Tit	*Periparus rufonuchalis*	14	Rusty-tailed Flycatcher	*Muscicapa ruficauda*

BIRDS OF BREIN NISHAT (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	10	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	11	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
3	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	12	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
4	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	13	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
5	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	14	European Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
6	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	15	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
7	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	16	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
8	European Bee-eater	*Merops apiaster*	17	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*
9	Slaty-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula himalayana*			

BIRDS OF RAJPARIAN WLS (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	13	Large-billed crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	14	Rufous-naped Tit	*Periparus rufonuchalis*
3	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	15	Cinereous Tit	*Parus cinereus*
4	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	16	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
5	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	17	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
6	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	18	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*
7	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	19	Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler	*Horornis fortipes*
8	Himalayan Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos himalayensis*	20	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
9	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	21	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
10	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*	22	Plumbeous Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*
11	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*	23	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*
12	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*			

BIRDS OF SINTHAN TOP (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	13	Rufous-naped Tit	*Periparus rufonuchalis*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	14	Cinereous Tit	*Parus cinereus*
3	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	15	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
4	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	16	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
5	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	17	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*
6	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*	18	Brown-flanked Bush Warbler	*Horornis fortipes*
7	Brown-fronted Woodpecker	*Dendrocoptes auriceps*	19	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
8	Himalayan Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos himalayensis*	20	Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*
9	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*	21	Grey-winged Blackbird	*Turdus boulboul*
10	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*	22	Dark-sided Flycatcher	*Muscicapa sibirica*
11	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*	23	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
12	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	24	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*

BIRDS OF ROYAL SPRINGS GOLF COURSE (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	19	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*
2	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	20	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
3	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	21	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*
4	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	22	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
5	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	23	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
6	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*	24	Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*
7	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	25	Rufous-naped Tit	*Periparus rufonuchalis*
8	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	26	Cinereous Tit	*Parus cinereus*
9	Black-crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	27	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
10	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	28	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
11	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	29	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*
12	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	30	Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler	*Horornis fortipes*
13	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	31	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*
14	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	32	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
15	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	33	Grey-winged Blackbird	*Turdus boulboul*
16	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*	34	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
17	Scaly-bellied Woodpecker	*Picus squamatus*	35	Ultramarine Flycatcher	*Ficedula superciliaris*
18	Slaty-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula himalayana*	36	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*

BIRDS OF KANGAN (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	14	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	15	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
3	Ibisbill	*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*	16	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
4	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	17	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
5	Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*	18	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
6	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	19	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*
7	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	20	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
8	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	21	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
9	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	22	Plumbeous Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*
10	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	23	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*
11	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	24	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*
12	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*	25	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
13	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*			

BIRDS OF NARANAG (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	12	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*
2	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	13	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
3	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*	14	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
4	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	15	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*
5	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	16	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*
6	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	17	Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler	*Horornis fortipes*
7	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	18	Plumbeous Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*
8	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	19	Grey Bushchat	*Saxicola ferreus*
9	Brown-fronted Woodpecker	*Dendrocoptes auriceps*	20	Russet Sparrow	*Passer rutilans*
10	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*	21	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
11	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*	22	Rock Bunting	*Emberiza cia*

BIRDS OF INNER DAL LAKE (June 2024)					
Sl No	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**	**Sl No**	**Species Name**	**Scientific Name**
1	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	13	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
2	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	14	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*
3	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	*Columba livia*	15	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*
4	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	16	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*
5	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	17	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
6	Whiskered Tern	*Chlidonias hybrida*	18	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
7	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	19	Clamorous Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*
8	Little Bittern	*Ixobrychus minutus*	20	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
9	Black-crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	21	Common Myna	*Acridotheris tristis*
10	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	22	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*
11	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	23	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
12	Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*			

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Striated Laughingthrush (*Grammatoptila striata*)

Striated Laughingthrush (Sattal, Uttarakhand, May 14, 2024)

Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Leiothrichidae
Genus:	*Grammatoptila*
Species:	*G. striata*
Size:	28 cm

Description & distribution: The Striated Laughingthrush is a very distinctive bird – it is a large, bulky laughingthrush, predominantly chestnut-brown with thin white streaks all over. It has a bushy crest and stout bill, blackish-brown or dark horn, with a paler lower mandible. The nominate subspecies, *G. s. striata*, has a chestnut crown, with and a floppy crest with long feathers. The upperparts are rufescent brown with bold white shaft streaks, while the wing fringes and tail are dull rufescent brown. The side of the head, from above the eye to chin and throat, is chestnut-chocolate with bold whitish shaft streaks, while the upper breast and side of neck are similar but paler. Mid-breast to lower underparts is buffy with long white streaks, while flanks, thighs and vent are dirty ochre. It has a brown to brick-red iris and greyish orbital skin. The legs are slate to greyish-brown. Sexes are similar. Juvenile birds are warmer above than the adult, and the streaks on underparts are narrower and fainter.

Earlier placed in the genus *Garrulax*, it was moved as the only species in the resurrected genus *Grammatoptila* following the publication of a comprehensive molecular phylogenetic study in 2018. Four other subspecies are recognized:

G. s. vibex, seen in the central Himalayas, western and central Nepal and south Tibet, has upperparts very slightly darker than nominate, darker underparts, and narrower shaft streaks on breast and belly. *G. s. sikkimensis*, seen in the central Himalayas from eastern Nepal to south-eastern Tibet, south-western China, Sikkim and Bhutan, is darker still, with less contrast between crown and upperparts, more chestnut wing fringes and tail, and narrower shaft streaks below. *G. s. brahmaputra*, seen from Bhutan east to Arunachal Pradesh and western Myanmar, is duller-crowned than the earlier two subspecies, has a less streaked crown, with broad blackish-brown lateral crown-stripe, paler upperparts with more obvious paler dull rufous-brown fringing, more contrasting breast-feather pattern, and less pronounced streaking below. *G. s. cranbrooki* is similar to *G. s. brahmaputra*, but with broader blackish lateral crown-stripe and less obvious streaking on forehead and above the eye.

The Striated Laughingthrush is resident in most parts of its range, in the northern temperate regions of the Indian subcontinent, including
Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Tibet and Nepal. It may sometimes show altitudinal movements.

Habitat & behaviour: The Striated Laughingthrush is usually seen singly or in pairs, although it may sometimes move around in mixed flocks and especially with other laughingthrushes. It is an inhabitant of tropical and subtropical moist lowland or montane forests, broad-leaf evergreen forests, secondary forests, scrub jungle, thickets, bamboo and wooded patches around villages.

It is more arboreal than most laughingthrushes, foraging mainly in the middle to lower canopy, feeding in the canopy of tall trees as well as in lower branches and undergrowth. It feeds primarily on insects (including beetles), berries and

seeds (including bramble), aromatic wintergreens, flowers like rhododendron, and gelatinous lichen.

The song is a repeated loud, vibrant, rolling *prrrit-you*, *prrit-pri-prii'u*, with several variations. When agitated, it emits a low grumbling *aawh, aawh, aawh'o aawh, aawh*. Calls include a soft, nervous, fairly high-pitched *wer-wer-wer-wer-wer* or *wuh-wuh-wuh-wuh-wuh wu-wúh*, and a gentle, rising *wu-wiw*.

Nesting: The Striated Laughingthrush breeds mainly between April and August. The nest is a broad, shallow, strong cup of coarse grasses, twigs, creeper stems, rootlets, dead leaves, green moss and green fern fronds, lined with coarse roots, fine black roots and dry grasses, and generally placed 1 to 6 metres above ground in the branches of larger trees or among climbing plants. The usual clutch consists of 2 or 3 pale greenish-blue eggs (although sometimes almost white), unmarked except possibly for a few dark brownish-red specks. Incubation duties are shared by both parents.

Local name: The Striated Laughingthrush is known as *'Daopa'* in Cachar, *'Nampiok-pho'* in Lepcha, *'Bhiakura'* in Paharia, and *'Kopiam* in Bhutia.

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Bird Humour

Umesh Mani

WHY DID YOU CROSS THE ROAD ?!
AND WHAT WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE?!
GRILLED CHICKEN
12/6
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(From Facebook, February 25, 2022)

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We wish all our members a very Happy Diwali!

For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.org. **E-group:** http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (*Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)*